Dunbar's Close Garden

— Edinburgh —

GARDEN GUIDE

Leave the bustle of the Royal Mile behind
and discover this peaceful retreat

History of Dunbar's Close Garden

The name Dunbar's Close most likely originated in the eighteenth century when the property was owned by the Edinburgh solicitor and writer David Dunbar. A bird's-eye view of Edinburgh drawn by James Gordon of Rothiemay in 1647 shows many of the town's gardens formally laid out with knot gardens. Significant gardens depicted on this map include Moray House, owned by Mary, Countess of Home, which contained elaborate terracing, knot gardens, a mount, a summerhouse and over 200 fruit trees. The massive spire-topped gate piers to Moray House can still be seen a short distance up the Royal Mile from Dunbar's Close. Town gardens such as this were the inspiration for the garden at Dunbar's Close.

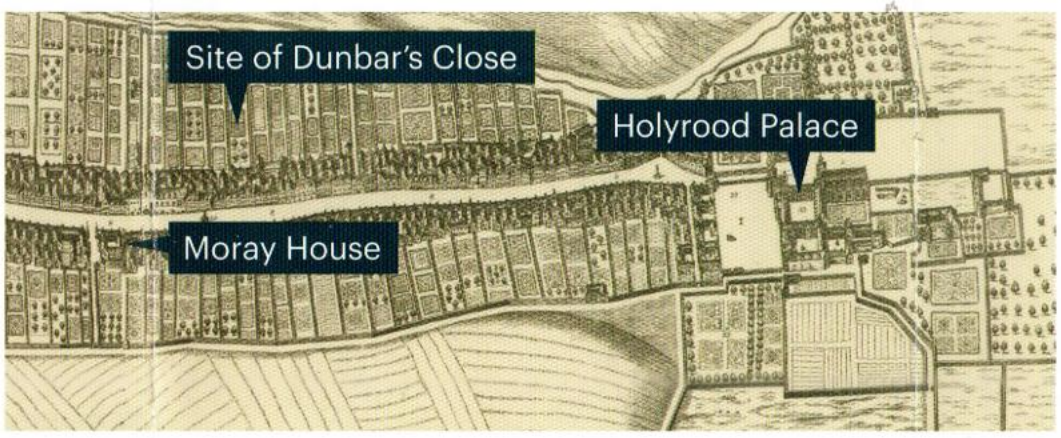
The site remained in use as a garden ground until the mid-1800s but was from this point increasingly occupied by tenements. These fell into decline, and by the 1960s were removed as part of a slum clearance programme in Edinburgh's Old Town.

Creation and design of the garden

Once the site was cleared of buildings the undeveloped backland area was acquired by the Mushroom Trust in the 1970s with a view to creating a public open space. Residents were offered a choice between a historic or a modern design. The idea of a seventeenth century garden was chosen as appropriate to this very historic area. Dunbar's Close is bounded on one side by the graveyard wall of the Canongate Kirk, built in 1691, while not far away in St. Anne's Yard, Holyrood, lay the Edinburgh Physic Garden, founded in 1670.

The landscape architect, Seamus Filor designed the garden to suggest the spirit and layout of a seventeenth century garden rather than aiming for an exact historical reconstruction. The gently sloping site was formed into shallow terraces, leading to the creation of garden rooms separated by yew hedges and trellises.

The garden is divided into eight distinct areas or garden rooms, see **A** - **H** on map, three of which contain knot gardens, a popular garden feature at the time.



Landmarks seen from the garden

Dunbar's Close looks north to Calton Hill and this fine view plays its part in the garden scene, particularly in winter when the buildings are lit by the evening sun. From left to right, the round tower, in the shape of an upturned telescope, is the Nelson Monument by Robert Burn, 1807. On the top of the hill the columns of the National Monument (work halted 1829) can just be made out. Straight ahead is the old

Royal High School (1825 by Thomas Hamilton). The circular temple to their right is the Burns Monument completed in 1830 by the same architect (above left). Bordering the garden on the eastern or right-hand side, is the eighteenth-century Cadell House with Panmure House built in 1691 just behind it, where Adam Smith lived from 1778 until his death in 1790.

Management

Dunbar's Close is managed by a partnership between the City of Edinburgh Parks & Greenspace Department and the Mushroom Trust. David Lownie our long-serving dedicated gardener, has been looking after the garden since 2000. The horticultural consultant and liaison between the Trust, the City and David Lownie is Johanna Lausen-Higgins. We hope you enjoy your visit to the garden and the chance to unwind in this tranquil environment.

The Mushroom Trust is a private charitable trust which is interested in promoting green spaces around the City of Edinburgh and elsewhere in Scotland, particularly those which will benefit people who have little access to such areas.

The garden is open every day except Christmas Day.

For further information please visit

mushroomtrust.com

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A Entrance or first knot garden
B Six yew compartments
C Second knot garden
D Third knot garden
E Lawn and wilderness
F Wild area or North-east corner
G Long border (facing Panmure House)
H South-east corner